

A Study of 'Re-Thinking Missions'
within the
Methodist Episcopal Church
in Southern Asia.

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Compiled from reviews of the Report sent
in by individuals and study groups from
among the membership of the Church,
and endorsed by many of the leading
national and missionary Church members.

BYCULLA, BOMBAY, INDIA.
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fair picture of the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church on this field, and that in many important respects the Appraisers might, in the interest of accuracy and fair judgment, have modified their views and recommendations if they had taken the opportunity to study with the missionary and national leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India the main problems connected with this great undertaking.

We believe that the friends and patrons of missionary work in this land, not only in India but also in America, will welcome a considered statement of this kind, giving the necessary details to support it, and indicating the matters concerning which the experience of missionary and national workers on this field should be placed side by side with the views of the Appraisers. The very limited opportunity of the Commission to get at the real facts of the complex situation in this vast land, requires that we make due allowance for what we consider to be defects and shortcomings in a Report which has withal many excellent qualities. At the same time, it is our conviction that a great injustice will be done to the missionary cause if the Report of the Appraisal Commission should be considered as giving the Church the final word in regard to Missions.

A STUDY OF 'RE-THINKING MISSIONS'

The ministers and lay members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India, and the missionaries connected with two of the societies that sanctioned the inspection of their work by the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, have felt it to be both a privilege and a duty to study the Report issued by the Appraisal Commission of that group. As men and women who desire the light and the inspiration that will enable us to do a better work in a better way we have sought in it for those things that would be of help. In considering all the Report contains, we have been guided by one desire, to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

In framing our statement of opinion on the Report, we would go beyond the polite acquiescence that is so easy to give to the opinions of an honoured group among whom there are individuals we should be glad to please. We would not be deterred, however, from expressing our real opinion by the fear that we may be accused of seeking an alibi for ourselves in so doing. We agree that the motives that prompted the survey are worthy; that the Commission was composed of men and women of high intelligence, integrity and devotion; that self-sacrifice and conscientious effort were put into the task; and that the Report witnesses to their honest thought and high purpose. These qualifications of the Commission have had their rightful influence in the study we have made, but they are not determinative. The reliability of the facts presented and the legitimacy of the conclusions drawn therefrom are of large importance, since legitimate conclusions drawn from mutually accepted facts alone are conclusive.

It is undeniable that the existing conception of the missionary cause and its work has come down to us from the past. With changing times and circumstances there has been wide variation in method, but the general ideal, including the origin, the incentive, the content of the message and the scope of its objectives, has been remarkably constant. It had its origin

in the example and the teachings of Christ, especially as emphasized in the Great Commission. (Matt. 28:19-20). It is implicit in the writings of the New Testament and was exemplified in the life of the apostolic Church. During the ages it has passed the scrutiny and claimed the allegiance of persons of outstanding and varied abilities. It has satisfied the consciences of the deeply religious. It has been an incentive that has taken men fearlessly to isolation and death. It has proved its power to transform individuals and nations. Its obvious outcome is the present-day Church of Christ as found in all lands. An ideal of such vitality and such beneficent results has a strong claim to credibility.

On the other hand, in the Report of the Commission now before us there is a proposed amendment to, if not a complete substitute for, this tried and tested missionary ideal. This substitute is the outcome of careful investigation and thought on the part of a score or less of high-minded, devoted and courageous men and women, appointed to their task by a small group of prominent laymen in the Church. Before their call to the task they had given no special attention to the work of missions as a whole. They were not acquainted with the fields to be surveyed or the peoples to be visited. With but one or two exceptions they were not able to communicate with those they visited in the language of the people themselves. Being unacquainted at first hand with the social, the political, the moral or the spiritual conditions of the peoples concerned in the surveys, they had to depend largely on inference drawn from what they saw and heard, and on what came to them second-hand through interested and uninterested interpreters. They came in personal contact with but a fraction of the missionary personnel on which they were to pass judgment. The longest time given to any one country was to India, where they spent about three months. Considering these circumstances the Commission accomplished much. With every sympathy for their efforts, the outcome can with difficulty be held as of equal authority with the existing ideal which it seeks to displace. In weighing the value of the Report we cannot disregard the probabilities implicit in this fact.

In this review of the findings of the Appraisal Commission we take cognizance of the Report alone. We deeply regret the fact that thousands of people formed their opinions of present-day mission work from a perusal of the hurried and fragmentary press-releases, which were themselves at variance with the methods urged upon the missionary by the Commission. We regard this method of publicity both ill-advised and unfair, as there is no opportunity to correct such wrong impressions. Nor can we base our review on the statements, the explanations and what in some cases seem to be modifications, as put forward by the group or individuals at the Hotel Roosevelt and other public meetings. The Report is in the hands of the members of the Churches concerned without any of these modifications and explanations and it is by what is in the Report itself that they will judge the cause of missions.

Theological Implications.

When the coming of the Commission to India was announced, the missionaries on the field had not anticipated that the findings would have to do with more than the practical issues of policy and method. This proved to be a misapprehension. A large and important part of the Report is devoted to those fundamental principles that lie back of the missionary movement, dealing with its essential nature, the content of the message, the scope of its objective, and its relation to other religions. Theological questions are thus necessarily involved. In the midst of the pressure of work, we are little inclined to take interest in the nice distinctions that grow out of theological controversy, but any challenge of the theological implications that lie back of our call and our consecration to the work, and our expectations for it, necessarily claims our attention. Nevertheless, as one group that studied the Report writes: "We do not intend to allow any theological statement of the Report to mar the usefulness of these findings in pointing the way to greater efficiency in our mission undertakings. Our real task is to achieve not a religion we must save, but a religion that saves us and other people. We are prepared to trust the non-Christian to do what he will with the Saviour of the world, and in spite of opinions expressed in the Report we will continue to rejoice in Christian confessions and decisions."

Another of our number writes : " When we examine the theology of the Appraisers, we see that they have given us, at great length, an essentially different conception of the theology heretofore considered as underlying all missionary effort. The significance of this may not be readily grasped in a hasty reading, but if the theological implications of the book 'Re-Thinking Missions' be pushed to their legitimate conclusions, and the significant omissions be fully taken into account, we shall find that they indicate not only the emergence of a different kind of 'Missions,' but also an essentially different kind of a Church. After due deliberation it may be said that if the theological views, the conceptions of Christianity, and the objectives of the missionary task as set forth in the Report of the Appraisal Commission be accepted, we shall have replaced by something that is radically different much of what is characteristic of foreign missionary work as at present understood and as carried on during the past century. Not only will the message, objectives and methods of the foreign missionary endeavour be fundamentally changed, but the present missionary personnel will be replaced by a company of men and women with an avowedly different purpose."

The interest of those on the field is less in theological questions as such, however, and more in the implications that necessarily must work themselves out in practical missionary effort and experience. Nevertheless, we cannot be indifferent to a theory of missions which seems to deny to Christ his deity, which ignores the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and which makes the religion Christ founded to be but one of many in the world. The apparent idea of the commission of a Christ who is little more than human, whose work is largely confined to precept and example, and of a kingdom of God that is limited to the accomplishment of such human betterment as will usher in a new era of peace and righteousness, and limited to this present world alone, is not sufficient. It furnishes neither the incentive to inaugurate mission work nor the power to carry it on. It conceives of it simply as a human task, for which human effort is sufficient, provided the human instrument is selected and prepared with care. On the surface this humanistic theory of

missions would seem entirely to discard any thought of the supernatural. On the contrary, the missionary with the teachings of the Bible he accepts confirmed in his own experiences, is convinced that the supernatural is essential for every step of the way : a supernatural incentive, a supernatural call to service, a supernatural illumination and empowerment, all culminating in a future life for which the Christian life on earth is a preparation. The Commission's new conception of missions seems to have no place for sin in man, and so no need of an atonement by the Saviour of the world. It envisages no future life and so has no place for the resurrection. Its idea of truth is a syncretism of the best thought of the best men of the world, and so has no need of a revelation. In a land where, century after century, promising reform movements have been smothered by absorption into a Hinduism ready to embrace anything, the missionary can see in such a programme nothing higher for Christianity than a place as one sect, or a colourless aspect of the dominant pantheistic and polytheistic religion. For such a programme the missionary is unwilling.

Aside from the fact that this humanistic conception of the Commission detracts from the glory of the Father, robs Christ of his deity and entirely ignores the Holy Spirit, we believe that its effects for harm will be manifested along many practical lines. The Commission definitely states that missionary personnel is the most vital and central factor related to Missions, and that any change in the theological basis of missions would necessarily affect the missionary motive. We give this ready concurrence, but we go further and state that the new theology requires not only a modification of motive, but also of missionary incentive, missionary personnel, the content of the message and the scope of the objective. The Commission holds that in the selection of the candidate for the field emphasis must be placed on such things as natural abilities, culture, capacity, outlook, tact and training. To this we agree; but, realizing that there is a spiritual and a supernatural aspect to the work, we would insist that there are certain qualifications essential which do not come under any such list. The assurance of a divine call, the conviction of a God-given duty, the possession of a divinely-certified message

that is for the glory of God and the welfare of men, the aid of an empowering Holy Spirit with an inward illumination that minimizes human error, the confident anticipation of an outcome that leads to a heaven above as well as to a new earth, are moral qualifications and spiritual helps that under the humanistic theology of the Appraisers would largely disappear. We frankly doubt whether this humanistic call would secure workers, and if it did we further doubt whether the human qualifications they might possess would enable them to persist in the disheartening and difficult service they would have to face. Men of such ideals have already come to the field, but few of them have remained long enough to make proof of their ministry. Regarding this matter, one of our missionaries writes: "For myself, if I had all the gifts of leadership and the best specialized training that is recommended for the missionary personnel, I could not go to the foreign field with no more of challenge than this. If there is any challenge in the Report it is a call back to America, there to preach the Gospel to our people who seem to be losing their grip on the very heart of the Christian message."

We question whether the Church, now supporting a work it believes to be of divine origin and accompanied by divine blessing, would be content to continue giving for what is pictured as little more than ordinary philanthropy. The present supporters of Missions are not indifferent to the implications of their work and the philanthropic institutions that inevitably follow the preaching of the Gospel, but their gifts are offered that others may be enabled to behold the Christ whom they have seen, and experience the comforts of religion that have come to them through the preaching of Christ crucified. A closer contact between the small body of laymen who prepared the Report and the great body of laymen who have supported mission work in the past would have led to less assurance that in the Christian Church, as it now is, could support be found for the new kind of missions envisaged.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the appeal to the non-Christian peoples depends on the content of the message. We are convinced it is not alone the life of human equality and fellowship and contentment and plenty as envisaged by the

Commission as the outcome of its new evangel, that will either win or greatly influence the non-Christian world. The philanthropic works that it commends, and which it seems to think would prove the "open sesame" to the heart of the non-Christian world, have been tried in many a place and under favourable circumstances. That there has been some outcome in the welfare of the people served we do not deny, but we do insist that in both human welfare and moral and spiritual results the preaching of the Gospel as the main point of contact has secured better results. It is the experience of missionaries that the appeal that is divorced from all promise of economic or social help secures the best results. Even among the most backward of peoples, the heart of man ever reaches up toward God. It is the Gospel of a spiritual salvation, not of worldly welfare, that in the end wins the most satisfactory response. The cry of the few in mission lands may be for temporal welfare, but the heart cry of the multitudes is for spiritual healing. "The Mission in the world of today will certainly not overlook the reformer, the intellectual and the irreligious; but it cannot forget that the numerical majority consists of men and women whom Christ loves, but who have not as yet been told of his love." Faced with this fundamental fact of the heart hunger of the multitude, it is no wonder that one study group writes: "Never before did we feel so imperative a call as now to declare the supremacy and the transforming power of Jesus Christ. A few years ago Mr. Gandhi is reported to have answered an inquiry as to the best way to naturalize Christianity in India with this statement: 'You must practice your religion without adulterating it or toning it down.'"

Practical Implications.

The Commission's emphasis on mission work as being fully indicated by the conception of "sharing," can but claim attention. The stress placed on this idea by the Jerusalem Conference, and the making of a sort of shibboleth of it by many other recent writers as well as by the Appraisal Commission, tends to leave the impression that something new in the way of method has been discovered, something most unusual and essential and which, if adopted, will lead to hitherto unattained results.

Whatever may be the newness or otherwise of the word itself, the idea implicit in it has never been absent from mission work. The ordinary mission worker does not now, as the Commission seems to think, and never has taken the attitude of continual censure and attack upon the beliefs and the customs of the people among whom he labours. He lives among them as a friend and neighbour, and recognizes that they and he have much in common. He shares with them all the good things they have to offer, and offers to them the good that has brought highest blessing to his own life. While unconvinced that his non-Christian neighbours have religious teachings superior in any particular to Christianity, he is convinced that often he sees exemplified in them traits and attitudes that are a rebuke to him for not living up to his own light. So far as India is concerned the one thing mentioned by the Commission as worthy of cultivation is somewhat unfortunate. While meditation is not as common among present-day Christians as it ought to be, the precept and example of the Bible is inexpressibly superior to the semi-self-hypnotic state cultivated by certain classes of devotees, in which, instead of the mind being concentrated on spiritual or any other kind of verities, it is simply emptied of all rational thought.

We hesitate to accept those parts of the Report which claim that the missionary should join forces with the non-Christian religions in the fight against what is termed secularism. As it appears in India secularism represents the rebellion of men of thought and conscience against the incongruities, the injustices and even the uncleannesses of the old religions with which they had formerly been connected. In matters of moral rectitude, social and political reform, and in friendliness to the Christian programme, educated men of India and Burma who go by the name of secularists are generally much more deserving of our sympathy and co-operation than the orthodox religious groups with which they are at variance. If these men are treated with Christian consideration their secularism is likely to prove but the half-way house on their way to faith in Christ.

That enlightenment of mind, rather than change of heart and salvation of soul, is the need of non-Christian peoples seems to

be a conviction of the Appraisal Commission. They show a naive belief that non-Christians of social and educational standing would be easy to win provided that what they consider the abrupt and direct approach of the present-day missionary is replaced by the new policies of the missionary of their imagination. To this the missionary can only answer that the friendly and indirect approach has been and is being used continually, but without adequate results. The experience of missionaries extending over centuries of time and reaching to many nationalities amply confirms the teaching of the Bible that it requires a supernatural power to change the hearts and minds of people.

We do not believe that it is fair or advantageous to attempt to advance the Christian faith by destructive criticism of the other faiths of India. The Christian appeal today is in the presentation of the life and teachings of Jesus, the Son of God, a life so matchless and a teaching so satisfying as to require no comparative theology for its support. It has in itself a completeness, a surety, and an uniqueness that do not necessitate "stimulation from other religions" or a "search for the ultimate truth," for that has been already found in the person of Jesus Christ who is "the way, the truth and the life." The modern missionary includes in his preparation a knowledge and appreciation of all that is best in the other faiths, and seeks not to destroy but to enrich religious truths which lead to God. One of our Christian nationals, who is himself connected with a nation-wide social movement carried on largely by those of another faith writes: "If any Christian looked forward to the continued co-existence of other religions with Christianity, he would merely be offering the Christian skeleton with the nerve center, the heart, gone out of it." In reference to the statement of the Commission that "it would be difficult to point out any one general principle in Christianity which would surely be found nowhere else," this same writer says: "No religion will accept this position for itself, much less a foreign missionary's. If Christianity is reduced to this insignificance it seems that missionary labours are in vain and the Church in India is built on poor, common soil which in a non-Christian environment will not and cannot stand long. The writer believes that

the uniqueness of Christianity lies not only in its simplicity, but in its doctrine of Atonement and belief in the presence of the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel under Compulsion.

In general we are quite in agreement with the Commission in its condemnation of the taking of unfair advantage in presenting the Gospel and pressing for decision. But we are inclined to feel that the two specifications mentioned do not represent a correct diagnosis of the case. While the scripture hour and the chapel service in our schools and colleges are regarded as important, yet in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and probably the same rule obtains elsewhere, attendance on religious teaching is optional and not compulsory. A decade before the Commission came to India, and before the "conscience clause" had entered largely into the political discussions of the nation, the authorities of our Church issued instructions making possible to the 46,000 pupils attending our schools the right of choice as to religious instruction.

Another aspect of the question is that hundreds of non-Christian parents choose our schools for their children because of the moral and religious instruction they know they will receive there. Furthermore, while provision for exemption from attendance on religious instruction is available, very few take advantage of it. As a case in point, recent inquiries in one of our larger institutions showed that out of an enrollment of approximately seven hundred and fifty, of whom perhaps three quarters are non-Christians, only four took advantage of the provision. A similar condition exists in regard to religious instruction in hospitals. Possibly the occasional institution may lay undue stress on attendance, but it is not at all common. Had our Master lived in our day he would have fallen under the strictures of the Commission, for he did not hesitate to use the occasion of healing, when gratitude must have been present, to press home the moral and spiritual lessons needed. The attitude of perhaps the majority who are treated in our hospitals was indicated recently when a group of lepers came to one of our medical centres for their periodic injections in treatment of the dreadful disease. Before leaving, the leader of the group

rebuked the attendant for his silence on the religious question by remarking that they preferred to go to a certain other hospital some distance away because in it they not only had medical treatment for their bodies but a message that comforted their hearts as well.

General Impressions.

Taken as a whole the Report of the Commission has in it much that arouses keen appreciation. Its literary form and finish is exceptionally attractive, and it discusses in a fairly complete way most of the problems which the workers on the field have to face. In many particulars its statements are so clear and cogent as to leave the reader with gratitude that his own thoughts have been so lucidly and forcibly expressed. There is an attempt at fairness that at times leads to such balancing of statement as leaves uncertainty behind it. With the substance of many of its findings the field finds itself in hearty accord, and many of the things recommended have been the avowed objects of missionary effort in the past. A lack of definite statement in two particulars, however, does us real injustice in the eyes of the Church in America. When a recommendation is made, the American reader naturally thinks it refers to a new policy or method evolved by the Commission. As a matter of fact more than fifty percent. of the findings have to do with activities already in existence, and should be understood as commendations rather than condemnations. The other particular in which greater clarity would have left a truer impression, lies in the fact that a number of the strictures which seem directed against the work as a whole or the missionaries as a group, are in fact only applicable to a limited number of missionaries or to work in restricted localities. In many cases the condemnation voiced by the Commission had been expressed by the missionary body before the survey was undertaken. There can be no objection to the pointing out of the occasional defect in the work or in the personnel, but it is only fair to the field when the statement clearly indicates that the condemnation, thus voiced, applies to a portion and not to the whole.

In forming an estimate of the Report it would be advantageous to the field if it could determine what parts of the findings

grew entirely out of what the Commission found in its survey, and what part took form from convictions brought by the group. There are expressions and implications which indicate that the general problem was approached with the belief that the past of missions was largely a mistake, that the present is too full of defects to escape being regarded as anything but a failure, and that the present-day missionary and his methods deserve little consideration. Further implications would indicate that the Commission approached the problem with the conviction that emphasis on the spiritual and moral must give place to emphasis on the mental, the social and the economic; that the approach must be indirect and have as its purpose no immediate response and no definite decision for Christ; that to any acceptable degree adequate response can only be expected from the educated of the higher grades of society, and that the outcaste and 'untouchable' masses of the population may well await some future dispensation of missionary activity. It would also seem to have been taken for granted that criticism against missions is worthy of larger credence than testimony in their favour, and that the educated non-Christian is more reliable in his estimate of any aspect of social reform or missionary work than is the educated minister or layman of the Church or the missionary who has given years of service.

A number of the recommendations of the Report especially appeal to us for they are familiar to our own thought and experience. If they have not been brought into effect already it is because of some obstacle too great to be overcome. In the past, lack of finances has explained many of the defects the Commission criticises, and the same condition now prevents us from bringing in many of the things they recommend. Other elements also enter in, such as the unexpected attitude of the people with whom we work. The recommendation that men of standing and unusual ability be used in large centres has been tried time after time with disappointing results. Able men who have come out under the Haskell and Cook Lectureships and other foundations will bear witness to the disappointment at the hearing received. The large use of what the Report terms "short term experts" would also seem easy and promising. Perhaps the term would

need some explanation. One missionary writes : "Specialists come to their greatest usefulness when they grow in and with their specialty. Few who have risen to leadership in America can be transplanted successfully to the Orient." The fact that time after time this attempt has been made, and with very little of success, has to be acknowledged sorrowfully by the missionary body.

It would seem that in some ways the field might give a lead to the home Churches, if we had some way of passing on our suggestions to them as the Commission has been able to do to us. The larger parish idea, mentioned at length by the Report, and commended to the field, is so near to what we in parts of the Methodist work in India term the circuit system, that it is difficult to believe that the Commission did not have it in mind when writing the details of the scheme. It is to be noted however, that while this works well in certain parts of the field it fails in others.

Mistakes in minor matters are deserving of consideration only as their presence in the aggregate indicates something of unreliability in the Report as a whole. That sectarian pride is back of the continuation of much unfruitful work is an opinion only, and without adequate justification ; that missionaries are tied down to mistaken policies because of the domination of the supervisory Home Board is not to our knowledge justified in the case of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the same is probably true in the case of the other Missions subject to the survey.

The Evangelistic versus the Philanthropic.

The Report rightly says : "The aim of missions is single." It then seeks to prove that in the attempt to achieve that aim, the educational, medical and uplift activities which have grown with the years have been diverging by-paths, leading the missions from their central aim ; and that the time has come when choice must be made as to the relative importance of the purely evangelistic and the so-called philanthropic. With such an interpretation we cannot agree, either as to the historical development or the necessity of a new policy. We know of very few missionaries in India who "feel that the missionary's

task begins and ends with the proclamation of the message." We know many who feel that educational, medical and social uplift work, carried on entirely apart from the proclamation of the message, have no place in the objective of Christian Missions, and that they more rightly belong under the activities of Social Service organizations. To the missionary, the essential outcome of the Gospel is evangelism, the giving of the good news, while the natural fruitage of evangelism, is that love for man that develops into service for humanity. To ask that philanthropy in the form of economic uplift, or schools and hospitals and other forms of social service be carried on without dependence on the spirit that is back of evangelism, is to expect the fruit without life in the tree. In effect it is rejecting Christ's first great commandment in order to leave more room for obedience to the second.

The aim of Christ's mission was single. It had one great objective, the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Its methods were many-sided, and it offered various kinds of service to man. Christ conversed, taught, healed and preached, with the one great object of bringing men into the Kingdom of God. His followers should have no hesitancy in following those same methods. The Methodist Episcopal Church, has from the first recognized that "evangelism by itself is incomplete and requires to be supplemented." Within ten years of his arrival William Butler, the founder of the Mission, had witnessed the establishment of a printing press, an orphanage for boys, an orphanage for girls, a hospital, and somewhat later a theological seminary. The press was established within three years because: "we greatly need some hymns, first catechisms and some tracts." The orphanages were the beginning of a work that has grown until we have 145 boarding schools and more than 1,000 day schools. The fundamental aim back of the founding of these schools was the desire to provide education for Christian boys and girls. A result, but hardly an aim, has been the education of thousands of Hindu and Mohammedan boys and girls, admitted at their own request. In all these schools it has been our aim to provide Bible teaching, and to consider the building of Christian character the most important test of success. The establishment of a

hospital for women was actuated by a great need, but it was also recognized that, as Jesus in the healing of the body also touched the soul, so there was opportunity to minister to the greater needs of the patient, not through compulsion, but because kindness had opened the way. The seminary was founded of course to provide pastors and evangelists for the future development of the Indian Church. Starting with these institutions, needed to supplement the evangelistic work, the Church introduced many other institutions and forms of activity.

That in India this is a time of sweeping changes is evident to all. No Commission was needed to tell us that. Political, social and religious forces are daily changing the need and the outlook of the people. At a time like this the wisdom of Jesus in founding his kingdom on the principle of love instead of on fixed law is evident. The principle remains constant while the application adjusts itself to changing times. The aim of missions is not changed. It is still the aim that Jesus had, the founding of the kingdom of God. There has never been a time when the people were so eager to hear the "Good News" as today. With the awakening of India has come the increased need of education. With the beginnings of the downfall of caste, the rise of the depressed classes, the improvement of the industrial life and the strengthening of the social uplift tendencies, the opportunity for service is unlimited. Is it true that the proposed new evangel of the Commission is better fitted to meet this changing condition than the old? Can we not rather say that the method of Christ, who went about ministering, preaching the Gospel, doing good, is still the best method for reaching and uplifting men?

The Church in India.

It is rather late in the history of Missions in India for the Commission to ask whether the creation of a Church should be the primary or a secondary aim, and to write of the Church "which will emerge in the future." Whether further development of the Christian Church should be the primary aim of the Missions of the future may still be an open question, but there is no doubt that it has been considered primary in the past; and, although it may be thought by some to be most imperfect, the Church has

been established and cannot be ignored. The Report states: "It ought to be the primary business of an interpreter of the Christian religion in the future, to permeate the personal life of the individual and the fabric of human society with creative ideals and energies which will renew and revitalize both the single units and the group, rather than to build a Church as an institution to stand out as an entity in itself apart from the larger whole of society." One group studying the Report writes: "If by this statement the Report wants us to draw the inference that the formation of a Church is a small and relatively insignificant matter compared with the permeation of the individual and society with Christian ideals, we cannot accept it. The formation of a Church is a natural and normal culmination of the endeavour to permeate individuals and society with Christian ideals. The kind of Church which the Report sets up and knocks down is a mere man of straw."

That the Commission itself admits the existence of the Church in India as a rather important body is evident from the fact that they would extend to it the privilege of inviting and approving the "relatively few highly equipped persons" who are to replace the present missionary body. The main objective of these persons is to "stand at the service of the local church." The question which naturally arises is the relationship of the Mission of the future to the Church in India. Is the continuation of the present programme of evangelistic work, or any future evangelistic programme, to be entrusted to the Church in India or to the "super-board of specialists" at the home base? Is the programme of education, religious education, medicine, rural life, women's work, and social betterment to be related to the Indian Church? It is stated that the "plan (for a board of control) is designed neither to supplant nor to control the organization or work of churches located in mission fields or of any other indigenous forces," but it is not at all clear as to the way that this new organization is to co-operate in the building of the Indian Church.

While Christ did not establish a Church, He laid the foundation for one, and his followers soon established churches throughout Asia Minor and Southern Europe. There is no historical ground for the implication that St. Paul gave to the early

churches only "an inspiration, a sense of the certainty of God, a new redemptive power", and left to the individual communities the organization of a Church and the perfecting of its system of doctrines. St. Paul had comparatively little heritage to pass on to the Aegean churches. Missionaries came to India with seventeen centuries of heritage behind them. The inheritance of the Indian Church from the West may have contained some deterrent characteristics which were not inherited by the early churches, but it also contained centuries of rich experiences and triumphs which the first century churches could not inherit. A comparison of the early Church in India with the early Churches in Asia, as pictured in the book of Revelation, would indicate that, in spite of the assertion that Christianity came to India under the handicap of "a finished system of doctrine and an unalterable type of institution" it has been able to produce Churches that compare favourably. A writer points out: "While one deplores with every member of the Commission the very weaknesses and evils which they point out as resulting from church organization, and while one agrees that these should be corrected or eradicated, still the conviction abides that one of the chief concerns of the mission must be to create the church as a self-perpetuating organization for Christian fellowship, and the maintenance of Christian ideals and standards of life." A study group offers this opinion: "We assert that there is no Christian future for the Oriental world without the Christian Church, since the Church is more than a group of Christians. After all, it is not hordes but nations who have made history. It is not mobs but organized societies who have made progress. Does not an organized Church exist for the common worship of God, before it can be made to render mutual service to man? If we read the Pauline letters aright, a Church came into being as soon as faith in Christ entered recorded history. In other words, a faith in Christ had to make a Church."

In the thought of the Appraisers, the Mission is primary, the Church in India is secondary. This is contrary to the thought and practice of Methodism. The Methodist Mission as an organization does not exist, for it ceased to exist as soon as it formed a Conference in India. From that time on, the Board

of Foreign Missions sent out missionaries to become members of the Indian Methodist Church. Only as members of that Church could they have a voice in the affairs of the missionary work of the Methodist Church in India. Much of this mission work was started by the ministry of William Taylor. He established churches among the English communities of our large cities and so inspired them to service that they opened up vernacular work about them, thus greatly supplementing the missionary work begun by the American Church in Bareilly. In the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the unit is the local church and this organization passes up through the quarterly conference to the district conference, on to the annual conference, to culminate in India in the Central Conference. Moreover, control from the home base has been diminished by the passing over of all detailed authority from the General Conference to the Central Conference in India. Property matters are almost entirely controlled by an organization in India—the Executive Board. The last General Conference made provision for the forming of a Council of Co-operation in India, which will bring to the field further rights to formulate its own policies, rules, and organization. This includes a Book of Discipline adapted to Indian conditions.

All this has been intended to remove even the small amount of Mission control that has existed and to give to the national Church, as a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, greater authority and responsibility for the evangelization of India. It should be noted that neither in intent nor practice has this presented any difficulty in meeting plans for Church union. Rather it paves the way for entering into full union when plans for this mature. It is idle to discuss the ideal conditions which might have prevailed had denominationalism not come to India. It is the natural desire of every religion and denomination to perpetuate itself when extended to other lands. Denominationalism does not necessarily mean religious controversy. The Churches in India have been remarkably free from the bitterness of the denominational differences of the West. Our first Methodist minister was a promising Presbyterian, offered to us as most valuable co-operation in those early days.

Christianity and Reform Movements.

A passing visitor may not feel the changing conditions in India, but anyone who has lived and worked for any considerable period in the land cannot fail to observe that far-reaching and unprecedented changes have occurred and are taking place today. When the history of the last few years comes to be written, no historian will fail to record the marvellous reform along social and educational lines that have recently taken place. The freedom and education of women ; the legislation against child-marriage ; the agitation against enforced widowhood ; the fight against drink ; the campaign against 'untouchability' are some of the reforms that have come during the brief span of a few years. These customs have the sanction of the old religions of the land ; their existence from time immemorial has been a very strong argument presented in their support. What has happened that these time-honoured customs are being reformed and replaced by better ones ? The old religious books, on which the religious sanctions are based, have not been changed. No new prophet with a new message has appeared. One of the study groups pointed out : "Bishop Thoburn used to speak of the utility of the Mass Movements for furthering the broad aims of evangelism, education, uplift work, vocational training, etc. He spoke of it as 'casting the net on the right side of the ship'. Those of us whose memories hark back to the beginnings of these Movements, and who have watched their development and output, have no hesitation in asserting that the Mass Movements have been the strongest stimulus to the reform movements of today."

The flinging open of the door of education and opportunity to women and other 'under-privileged' ones; the teaching by precept and example against the evils of child-marriage, intemperance, and 'untouchability' are some of the implications of the Gospel of Christ which began to be disseminated after the coming of Christian missionaries to India. This was the leaven which was working and will keep on working until the whole social fibre of the country is so regenerated that it can be said in all truthfulness that the Kingdom of God has come on earth. The lack of appreciation by the Commission of this leavening of the whole

social life, is one of the remarkable omissions of the Report. A group has expressed itself with regard to this omission: "Whatever truth there is in the criticism of the personnel, both missionary and national, or in the weakness of a subsidized Church, or in the schools and hospitals, there is in the end an impression of rather general failure. If this impression was not the desire of the Commissioners, and the proceedings of the meeting in New York seem to give some assurance that it was not, then the presentation of the criticism, so out of proportion to an appreciation of what is of permanent worth, has not been fair to those who have in the past and the present devoted their lives to the cause. It is the things that are not said, as well as those that are, that create a total impression. No supplementary statement, however strongly worded, can eliminate the harm already done by these omissions."

The Christian Church in India has, in short, been the chief factor in bringing about the new day in India and warm tributes are paid to this phase of Christian missions both by Christians and non-Christians. The Church is a living organism and thus has adapted itself to changing conditions. Methods that were found useful in the past, but which are no longer considered efficient for the changed atmosphere, are being gradually replaced by new ones. The leaders of the Christian Church in India, both foreign and national, are keenly interested in observing existing conditions and devising ways and means of adaptation.

Devolution.

It is very difficult to reconcile the proposals on Devolution with the plans for reorganization. Side by side with a suggestion that the time has come for a "gradual coalescence of the missionary and national elements in the control of activities and the subsequent gradual withdrawal of the missionary participants" is a plan for replacing the present missionary body by another more pleasing to the Appraisers. That the new personnel and mission organization are not considered temporary would seem evident from the statement that the period of missionary efforts of more than a century is but temporary compared with the permanent era which is now beginning. No proposals for turning over to the Indian Church any responsibility for evangelization,

or for educational, medical or social uplift work seem to be included in the programme for future development. The Indian Church is evidently to exist only to control its own affairs, and side by side with it another organization, a union Mission board, is intended to be the successor to any of the mission interests of the past century which are considered worthy of continued existence.

As a Methodist Church we cannot accept such an arrangement. We are committed to the building of the Church in India which will succeed to our entire heritage. At present this youthful Church needs advice and help. Such advice and help can best come from those within the Church, who understand India, its problems and the problems of the Church. Devolution should mean not only the gradual coalescence of the missionary and national elements in the control of the Church but in responsibility for its activities. That the missionary groups have for some years been passing on to the national groups both control and responsibility is evident from a study of the extent of Indianization of the various units of control of Indian Methodism, namely the Bishops, the Central Conference, the Executive Board, and the Annual Conferences.

The desire for Indianization in the Episcopacy was recognized by the General Conference, and by an enabling act the Central Conference was given authority to elect a General Superintendent. This resulted in the election of an Indian Bishop—a gain of 33% in the Indianization of this control of activities. A further mandate of the last General Conference makes it possible within this quadrennium to increase the number of Indian bishops. The membership of Central Conference shows an increase in the number of Indians from 32% in 1920 to 61% in 1931. In the Executive Board, up to 1920 all members were American bishops or missionaries. In 1932, of the 45 members (apart from the bishops) 23 or 48% were nationals. In about ten years the Indianization of the Executive Board has increased from nothing to nearly one-half, and this is the body which controls the financial and property interests of the Church. Under the supervision of this body a Property-

Holding Board for holding church property in native states, composed entirely of nationals, has been formed.

In Annual Conferences, in 1920, there were in the Southern Asia field 95 missionary members and 164 national, or 63% national. In 1931, there were only 79 missionaries and 340 nationals or 81% national. In the Finance Committees of these eleven Conferences, there were in 1932, 133 members, of whom 72, or 54%, were nationals. In the polity of Episcopal Methodism, the key man is the district superintendent. He is the chief executive of our system and, under the supervision of the bishop, administers the work of the district. He is directly in touch with all the work and has unrivalled opportunities for shaping policies and methods. That this significant and important office is being consistently made over to the Indians can be clearly understood when we note that in 1914 of the 43 district superintendents only 4, or 9%, were Indians, while in 1933 of 76 there were 39 Indians or 51%. Whenever a suitably trained and sufficiently experienced Indian has been available he has been placed in a position of responsibility in preference to a missionary. It must be said to the credit of the nationals that in the large majority of cases they have proved themselves capable of the confidence placed in them, and have in many cases showed marked ability in leadership. The Indianization of the Church in India has not only been in the leadership, but we find the Church is given every opportunity to use indigenous methods, forms of worship, and Indian music in its devotional life. It has been well said: "By Indianization we do not mean the perpetuation of everything Indian just because it is Indian. We believe in preserving whatever is best in our culture and want at the same time to borrow freely the best that other cultures can offer, adapting them to our purposes."

Subsidizing the Church in India.

Missions have greatly varied in methods and degrees of helping in the cost of building the Church in India. Often this has been by means of subsidies, in larger cities in the form of Mission contribution to the salary of the pastor. In the Methodist Church we are pleased to note that the average city

congregation supports its own pastor. It is true that often missionaries make personal contributions as do other mission workers. These are not Mission subsidies, and the average missionary today has had to divert much of his tithes and offerings to district work. Most of these city churches have continued to be self-supporting in spite of the decrease in the income formerly received from missionaries and mission-paid workers. There has been a decided increase in the giving of the lay members of our city churches. Thirty years ago, aside from English congregations, only Rs. 17,000 was paid for pastoral support in the whole of India, and a large part of that was given by missionaries. In 1912, this amount had increased to Rs. 34,737, in 1922 to Rs. 84,625 and in 1930 to Rs. 171,000, the amount increasing ten-fold in 30 years. This is due not only to the increase in the Christian community but largely to a greater participation by the laymen of city churches. Twenty years ago, out of some twenty city vernacular churches, only three were self-supporting. We now have 75 to 80 vernacular churches in city and district centres that are entirely or very largely self-supporting.

Most of the subsidies given by the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions are being spent on workers appointed to village pastorates which are in reality itinerancies. Except in Mass Movement areas, there are no organized churches in those village pastorates, but isolated Christian families, too scattered to attend regular services or to support a pastor. The reduction in work appropriations, almost annual since 1924, has been equivalent to a decreasing subsidy, but unfortunately this has not increased the self-support of those areas, for the elimination of hundreds of workers has left no pastor to support. The attempt to enforce partial support in such areas has resulted in making the few pastors, left with territories too large to be cared for, a sort of mendicant priesthood, often more concerned with their own support than their ministry. The appropriations for subsidies to churches and schools in India ten years ago were a total of \$ 532,000 or about Rs. 1,500,000. In 1933 the appropriations were \$ 36,500 and it is estimated that additional receipts from Designated Gifts may be \$ 200,000 more. This would mean a

reduction in appropriations of more than 50%, and as schools cannot be reduced in the same proportion as the evangelistic because of necessary overhead costs, the reduction in subsidies to village pastorates and to the building of the Indian Church has been about 70% in ten years. It has of course not been possible for this to be made up from local resources, and has resulted in the closing of much of the itinerant pastoral work.

The following quotation is from one of the study groups: "We concur with the recommendation of the Commission that our city and town Churches should be entirely self-supporting. To a very large extent they are, or are nearly so. Where this is not the case, we support the recommendation that the pace of independence of foreign money should be accelerated by diminishing subsidies. We are of the opinion, however, that as might be expected, despite their best intentions, the perspective of the Commission in respect to the vast unoccupied areas in India, is faulty. Self-support cannot be speedily obtained among rural communities, with the prevalent economic conditions, and where evangelization is at an incipient stage, or where new fields are being entered. Moreover, with the type of training advocated by the Commission for Christian workers, a background of cultural demand really necessitates a larger expenditure on this type of worker than the simpler mission worker now employed very effectively in rural work." The time has come when the Board of Foreign Missions has ceased to subsidize "churches or church personnel" in the sense in which these terms are understood in America. The subsidies now coming in the form of designated gifts from individuals or churches in America, are not being used to support organized churches, but for the support of itinerant pastors who correspond in India to the home missionaries in America. These itinerant pastors are not only shepherding the village congregations, usually too scattered for regular worship, but they are also evangelists among the people of other faiths. To set a definite time when such subsidies shall cease is equivalent to setting the time when all gifts for missions shall cease. In our opinion that day is or should be far distant. In rural districts self-support may be of two forms: the care of a pastor by the offerings of his congrega-

tion, or the shepherding of the people by an honorary pastor. On account of the poverty of most of our Christians in rural areas, the latter method promises to become the most likely of success. In some sections of our Church, the securing of village leaders and training them to become honorary pastors has been quite successful. It will need to be further developed.

Indigenous or Western.

A phase of the rise of nationalism, is the tendency to decry all that savours of an alien origin. Every country has in its heritage a mixture of the indigenous and the borrowed. India is no exception. The difficulty in India is to select what is really indigenous. The real aboriginee of India can rightly claim that all the so-called culture of the Hindu and Mohammedan is, like that of the West, borrowed. The objection however is usually against Westernism, and too often this is laid at the door of the missionary. The use of western dress and food has been the result not only of the impact of the West on the East but also the contact of the East with the West. The Indian student, business man, or statesman who has been to the West usually adapts his dress to western styles, because of an acquired liking for them. Hindu and Mohammedan students in boarding schools and colleges as often adopt western dress as do Christian students. The use of western furnishings in a home, and western manners of etiquette are not limited to Christians but are found among educated Indians of all religions and classes.

The early missionaries passed on to the Indian Church the ritual, the ceremonies, the form of organization with which they were familiar. Such practices of the Church are not fixed or unalterable. Much has been done to remodel or replace these practices, and much has still to be done by the Indian Church itself. The following was written by an indigenous member of the Church: "The forms of service in the villages, the use of Indian music and songs, the springing up of *ashrams* in many places and many other matters in the devotional life of the church, indicate some of the steps that have been taken along this line. In our efforts to Indianize the Church let us not think that everything western is unsuited or dangerous to the

growing Indian Church or that everything Indian, just because it is Indian, must be utilized for the spiritual and devotional life of the Church."

Perhaps the greatest fallacy in the charge that the missionary has introduced too much westernism has to do with the acquiring of property and the erection of buildings. It has often been said that the churches and schools erected by the Mission are too expensive and western to be of use to the Indian Church. The average city church is not built expensively and few of them are too large for their congregations. The mosque in India is no less solidly built or less costly than our city churches; many of the Hindu temples especially in the South have cost many times as much in labour and money as the average Christian Church. Are we to admit that Hindus and Mohammedans can afford a place to worship, and not our Christians? Are we to feel that the present comparative poverty of our Christian Church is to be a permanent feature? The Colleges erected by the Hindus and Mohammedans in Lucknow are not more oriental or better adapted to Indian conditions than our own Lucknow Christian College. All over India, private societies inspired by Christian missions, are building schools. They too find that it is necessary to put up strong, well-built structures, adequate for the communities they intend to serve. That is what has been done by Christian missions, and it has been done with the advice and help of those best fitted to advise on construction in India.

A house in the average Indian village is built of mud. The well-to-do landlord of the village builds his house of brick or stone because he can afford it and because he knows that in the end it pays. Compared with its cost, the annual upkeep of the average village house is ruinous. Some mission houses built in the past were often larger than needed, and thus more expensive. Seldom however have any mission buildings been costly. Usually they have been built as cheaply as good workmanship, healthful ventilation, and permanent materials would permit.

The Indian Church will have no difficulty in taking over the property of the Mission, extensive though it may be. It is much easier to do so than it would be had it been less costly and less

permanent. The question is whether it can continue to operate the institutions for which much of the property was acquired. At present it cannot do so without continued support from America. It is our hope that support be continued for such institutions as are needed and which continue to fit into the service to be rendered by the Church in India.

Educational.

The chapters on education in "Re-thinking Missions" contain much of keen observation and careful weighing of possibilities and probabilities. In them we find much that will help, but many of their observations are the product of American minds that have viewed the situation as it would naturally appear to a foreign observer, and apparently with the impression that there is such similarity in the condition of the young people of the two countries that generalizations are both safe and profitable.

As has already been mentioned, education as an activity of the Methodist Mission arose from the need of educating orphan-children. It has always been looked upon primarily as a need to educate Christian boys and girls, and in our girl's schools a large majority of the students are Christians. In the early days, the privilege of attendance in mission schools was extended to Hindu and Mohammedan boys because of the difficulty many of them had in securing an education elsewhere, Government schools, and private schools other than Mission, have increased much more rapidly than mission schools, but the demand for education among boys has increased more rapidly than schools. Any attempt on the part of our Mission to close middle or high schools has met with strong objections from the communities served as well as from the Government. Usually the latter has found means to prevent the closing of a school by uniting with the community in financial plans for keeping it open. In such cases, the Mission has often been asked to continue to operate the school without financial responsibility.

The question frequently arises as to the wisdom of concentrating upon the education of Christian boys and girls. That this is a responsibility of the Mission has long been recognized. Two arguments have always been advanced against the limiting

of educational facilities to Christians : first, it would cost more, for the admission of a large number of full-fee students helps to support an institution ; and second, it would be unwise to segregate Christian boys and girls from those of other communities.

The criticism of the Appraisers that the education provided is not suitable for the needs of the people has much to be said for it. This criticism sometimes fails to recognize the difficulties. The system of education in India is a Government system. Any school which does not become a part of that system is limited to an enrollment of such students as have no desire to use their educational certificates for securing employment. Practically no employment is open in India to those who do not attend an institution recognized by Government. If a school desires such recognition, it must adapt itself to the curricula, examinations, and code of rules of the Department of Education. In western countries, education is a matter of self-improvement and culture, and is seldom wholly dependent upon the motive of employment. This is not true in India, for education is almost the only door of escape from poverty, hunger, and deprivation of most things that make living worthwhile. Even the village boy when he begins to learn his letters cherishes the hope that he is beginning studies which will finally fit him for a position which will take him out of his village. One who comes to know the monotony, the squalor and the hopelessness of the Indian village, no longer wonders that the average village boy or girl, after having had a glimpse into the outside world, has no desire to return to his poverty-stricken and unsanitary village to live.

Scarcity of land, which is held under the large landowner and joint family systems, makes it difficult for our Christian boys, most of them from poor families who do not own land, after training in modern agriculture, to return to their native villages as farmers. There is no chance for them to become more than farm coolies. Trades are safe-guarded by caste rules, and caste guilds, and the Christian boy, who has been trained as a carpenter blacksmith, tailor or shoemaker, returning to his native village, finds there little opportunity of employment at his trade, or for the sale of his products if he starts his own business. To relate education to a home life so

devoid of even the barest necessities, and under the shadow of the outcaste system, is not possible. Schools therefore educate village and city boys alike for such employment as is offered by Government or by industrial concerns in large towns or cities. That thousands of Christians, many born in the villages, have found from this system opportunities for lives of enjoyment and service, is a testimonial to the fact that it has some merits. Rural education must be largely the problem of Government. A union effort of Missions to establish experimental schools in mass movement areas would be worthwhile. Industrial schools are also much needed, and should be established by union efforts to insure permanency. Many such schools have been tried, and closed when the problems of financing and staffing them became too great for a single Mission.

The mission school has never been intended to be an agency for proselytizing, but rather one for the diffusion of Christian ideals and for the building of character. It has also furnished an education to thousands who would otherwise have been deprived of it. Evidence of the value of this service is not wanting from the hundreds of loyal Hindus and Mohammedans who are always ready to speak a good word for their *alma mater*. The favourable position of Christian Missions in India today has been in no small measure determined by the extension of the privileges of educational facilities to Indians of all classes and creeds without distinction.

Religious Education.

It comes to us as a surprise that in making its recommendations the Commission failed to mention a subject as important as Religious Education. In our own Methodist schools we have a well worked-out plan of Bible study and character development. For several years, one of our missionaries has devoted his entire time to developing curricula and producing literature for use in religious education in India. He has had many others associated with him. Institutes and training classes in various parts of India and Burma have been held. A complete course, graded for each class, and many supplementary books, either written for or adapted to India, are now available and in use in many of our

schools. A large quantity of helpful material for young people's societies has also been made available.

Development of Agriculture and Industry.

Among those chapters of the Report for which we wish to express keen appreciation, and from which we hope to secure a real betterment of our work, we call attention especially to those on Agricultural Missions, and on Missions and the Development of Industry. While it is a mistake to suppose that these aspects of the work have been over-looked in the past, as is evident when one is reminded of the strenuous efforts of Carey at the beginning of modern mission work in India, and has been and is now evident in the work of scores of others who followed along his general lines, it is frankly confessed that the emphasis has not been commensurate with the importance of the need. Since the organization of the National Christian Council, twenty years ago, a larger measure of co-operation growing out of the enlarged possibilities of consultation has developed, but the opportunity for developments along the line suggested in the Report are innumerable.

There are no doubt explanations of this poor response to a situation, but we do not claim them as adequate excuses. The ingrained conservatism of the people who pride themselves on holding that what was good enough for their fathers is good enough for them, and the handicap of ignorance, more widespread than is often imagined by people of other lands, are obstacles that have wrecked more than one attempt. There has also been a religious element that has contributed to lack of success. The continually reiterated dictum of the fatalist *jo ho so ho* (what will be, will be) destroys the urge of ambition for better things and cuts the sinew of effort on the part of the people whom we would lead to better things in these directions. Even so, the fact remains that we have been slow in doing what consecration and effort might have brought to pass. If the Boards concerned can give the financial support that will make possible the amalgamation of plants and interests and supervisory administration as recommended in the Report, the Missions concerned will undoubtedly be able to take a long step forward in agricultural training and uplift work. The National Christian Council inaugurated and carried through, an Industrial Conditions' survey some years ago, and in many of the

large cities there are organizations under missionary inspiration or leadership, that offer co-operation and information to Government and heads of industrial institutions. The rapid development of industrialism, on the other hand, is decidedly outstripping all our efforts, and insistently calls for larger efforts from us.

Medical.

We could have wished a more sympathetic attitude had been taken toward the Medical Missions work as it exists. The chapter reads as though the assessor gave to pride of profession precedence over the natural sympathies of a Christian heart. The logic of it, which comes dangerously near to being "the best or nothing," enforced in this branch of the service and carried to other departments, would bow us off the stage. We must give up all hope of having mission hospitals, which are dependent upon free gifts, if they must be as well-equipped as government institutions supported by state taxes, or even as the institutions endowed by the benefactions of wealthy donors. It is true that there are a few mission hospitals that are outstanding, but in the most of them there is a shortage of equipment and personnel that is to be regretted. Nevertheless there is a large measure of effectiveness in their service, and the areas they serve would be entirely without medical help of any effective kind but for them. The advice of the Commission, which we must believe is intended more as a spur than as a piece of serious counsel worthy of acceptance, would monthly leave to the ravages of incurable ailments and the torture of preventable pain, literally tens of thousands who now have access to Christian doctors who are tender and sympathetic and of sufficient skill to care for their cases. A great medical need of India is the provision of doctors with travelling dispensaries for work in the villages where the majority of the afflicted of India now suffer and die without any medical aid. The money spent in equipping one hospital to the degree of efficiency demanded by the Commission would provide a good number of doctors and dispensaries for rural medical work, and would meet a much more urgent need and render a far larger service.

Work for Women.

The chapter on the nature, the effectiveness and the continu-

ance of women's work is a satisfying one. It recognizes largely what has been done and what yet remains to be accomplished, and recommends whole-heartedly the continued financial and moral support of the home Church. In this we concur. We would wish however that this apparent estimate of the progress made in the emancipation of women in India had more foundation in fact. The brilliancy and the attractiveness of the very few Indian women who have appeared in public life, and their own great confidence in the immediate future of their sex, have blinded the eyes of the visitors to the existing disabilities and handicaps that beset the way of the advancement of womanhood as a whole in a land where they have been long oppressed. "The day dawns, but it is still night" in this particular.

The criticism of the Bible-Reader would, on the surface, seem to be just, but the Commissioners would have had to modify their judgment had they taken into consideration some facts like the percentage of literacy among the women of India, and their social and intellectual ability. A group of missionaries and nationals who studied the Report says: "The need for the training of Bible women on broader lines no doubt exists, but the fact that women with a Christian experience, even though they have had very little cultural opportunity, have been very influential instruments in bringing about conversions to Jesus Christ among village people, is so well known as to need no argument. The important work done by the woman evangelist, however inadequately she may be trained, becomes impressively apparent when it is remembered that 971 out of every 1,000 females over five years of age in India cannot read or write."

Christian Literature.

The problem of Christian literature as an aid to evangelization and as a supplementary reinforcement to mission work is one of the most puzzling problems we face. With the needs of a dozen or more different major language areas to supply, with an almost complete absence of indigenous books that can safely, from a moral standpoint, be placed in the hands of young people, with a divergence so wide between the thought of the East and the West as to make translations unsatisfactory as a rule, with a very large lack of support of literature and publishing agencies on the

part of the home Boards, and with a buying constituency so poverty stricken as to compel loss on almost every book published, we had eagerly looked forward to the help the Commission could give us in advice along this line. After pointing out the failure of the Report to give credit either to the indigenous writers in various languages for literature of importance, or to the several societies and agencies such as the Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, the Christian Literature Society and the two Literature funds of the National Christian Council, engaged in producing and publishing Christian literature, a missionary, who is an authority on Christian Literature in India, having been vitally connected with the problem for years, writes : " On the whole we look in vain to this chapter to provide us either with new suggestions, or inspiration ; nor is there any hint as to how funds for supporting the already existing agencies and their programmes may be found."

Mass Movements and Reconstruction Centres.

The decrease in subsidies has perhaps had its most disastrous effect upon the Mass Movement areas of our Church. Much has been said in condemnation of the movements which brought into our Church by far the larger part of its membership. Reviewed apart from its present problem, much can be said in favour of the movements. Anyone acquainted with the long list of stalwart Christian leaders who have been the product of these movements, would not be likely to condemn the material, or to repeat the charge that the motives back of these movements were " seeking the line of least resistance " and " the desire for large numbers." These movements have produced a large number of workers and laymen, who represent the larger proportion of the membership of Indian Methodism. The backward condition of the Church in those areas today is not due to the kind of people admitted to baptism, but to failure to develop the Church in those areas. The provision of Christian teaching, educational facilities, and social and economic improvement, has been sporadic and inadequate, due largely to lack of funds. Here and there great souls have risen above their environment, but the larger number are still not much removed from the level of those about them. And yet, the Methodist Church would be much poorer today had it not been for its Mass Movements. Within our membership are these thousands

who experienced a real soul hunger for the ministry of Christ. They have not failed the Church, but the Church has failed them—failed to extend the privileges of Church fellowship throughout its entire membership. One reader of the Report writes: "One cannot help but feel that the Mass Movement in India has not been adequately evaluated (by the Commission). The group movement in both its religious and social aspects is, with all its weaknesses, one of the most hopeful and remarkable achievements of Missions. Attention should be called to the fact that, weak and inadequately shepherded as many of the nominal Christians are, yet there are vast numbers of them who are conscious of having changed in some measure their spiritual and social status. They enroll themselves as Christians in the Census, and they are known as Christians in their communities; the Government also has been impressed with the large growth in the Christian community through the Mass Movements, and in its eyes people of the 'depressed classes,' who have become Christians are given an elevated status, and are no longer regarded as 'depressed classes.'"

One of the motives for the increased interest in the 'depressed classes' on the part of Hindu leaders like Mr. Gandhi is that these classes, now thoroughly awakened to their conditions and to the power which their vast numbers give them in an enlarged electorate, are everywhere considering whether their future lies with Hinduism or Christianity. The improvement in conditions and position of those of their number who came into Christianity through the Mass Movements has been no small factor in turning the attention of all towards Christianity. Had the Church measured up to its opportunity to extend to these Mass Movement Christians the privileges and responsibilities of Christian fellowship, which they had a right to expect, there is little question but that hundreds of thousands would now be knocking at the door for admission to the Christian Church. That the admission of the low caste and the outcaste to the Church is necessarily a deterrent to the admission of the high caste is disproved by the similar movements which are now taking place among high caste peoples, and even by movements in which high caste and low caste people enter the Christian

Church together. Had the Commission been able to make wider inquiry, it would have learned that it is the Missions which work most successfully among the Mass Movement outcastes that in the end win by far the larger number of caste converts also, and that it is only where there has first been a work among the outcastes and the lower castes that anything analogous to it has broken out among the high caste people.

"The Mass Movement is a challenge to be met, a problem to be solved, not something to be ignored or discarded." How will it be solved? The Rural Reconstruction Centre, with its church, school, and social uplift programme offering a many-sided impact upon the entire life of a community, would seem to be a promising solution if funds could be provided to make it possible. The recent study of Mass Movements under the auspices of the National Christian Council will assuredly bring to us many facts and much helpful advice. The Methodist Church in India recognizes in this situation one of its greatest problems, and at the same time one of its finest opportunities.

Central Control of Missions.

It is quite natural for a group of business men to propose that the missionary enterprise should be run on "big business" lines. The present financial difficulties of the Methodist Episcopal Church is due largely to an attempt to do this. The Centenary Movement, in many ways considered to be an impetus, was in reality not so. In the first hundred years of the Board there were only twenty-two years that did not show an increase in the income, and when there were setbacks they were not large. In 1886 the million-dollar budget was reached, and in 1918 it was two million. In 1919 five million-dollars was raised, and in 1920 it was six millions. For three years a five million-dollar level was maintained. Then began the retreat, which in 1932 dropped below the 1916 level, and this is still falling. It is true that the Methodist Centenary gave to India some splendid equipment, but the Appraisal Commission very frankly says this does not represent progress. It also gave to India a heritage of property debts, because of unfinished financial programmes, due to hopes unrealized and pledges unpaid. We do not seek to blame any one for this for we, ourselves, were also great believers

in the Centenary. We do point out, however, that the continuation of a steady growth without "big business" methods would perhaps have been more beneficial. The Inter-Church World Movement which followed was "big business" on a larger scale. We refer only to the outstanding result of the Movement: a debt which has hampered our Church for many years, and represents a large part of nearly three million-dollars paid on debt since 1924. The World Service programme had its origin in the same thought of "big business," and while it may have been of benefit to other organizations of the Church it has done much to hinder the foreign missionary programme.

Missions had their origin in a burning desire on the part of some to share with others in foreign lands the blessings of the Gospel. Such an enterprise required the backing of others. Everyone could not go, but many who could not go were willing to help that others might go. As the Commission of Christ was to the early Church, it was but natural that the rediscovery of this Commission should be accepted by the later Church. A Church however is composed of individuals, and can only be a missionary Church as the pastor and his people share the desire to give the Gospel to other lands. It is most natural and necessary therefore that there should be contact between the need on the field and the Church at home, which can satisfy the need. The more indirect the contact the less the results. A large and impersonal organization cannot establish the contacts that an individual appeal can. One who is ready to give for the need of Ram Lal in India is not so ready to give to an impersonal World Service. The proposal to maintain denominational boards to collect funds for a central board that has full power to disburse those funds without regard to the wishes of the donors, and without responsibility to either the field or the constituency, would be impracticable. One of the groups that have been studying the Report writes: We feel that this super-organization will insulate the field from the Church in other lands, and with its numerous salaried specialists prove a burden to the cause of missions. It tends toward a bureaucracy that smacks of a machine which is impersonal in its relation to the field."

In our Methodist work, we must admit that the Church in India is losing its contact with the Church in America, as is evident from the source of the funds now reaching the field. It is still possible to secure the support for missionaries through the Parish Abroad plan, but it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Board to secure undesignated funds. There is no longer the access to the Church that formerly existed. With a decrease in missionaries, fewer are available in the necessary programme of keeping up interest in the Churches. The average gift per member in the Church had steadily increased until 1870, and then for about fifty years the average remained stationary, any increase in amount being explained by an increase in Church membership. After increasing three-fold for the Centenary period it has returned to normal. The Centenary gave an enlarged programme which now makes it difficult to return to the lower level. In mission activities it is easier to expand than to contract, especially when institutions with any large overhead have been established.

We see many disadvantages in trying to conduct the financial affairs of Missions through the proposed Central Board. That Board would be too far away and too unfamiliar with field facts to control fairly the allocation of funds to the various units of work. Even a Mission Board, more familiar with its own work than would be possible for a union Board, finds it most difficult to allocate funds in detail. There is much to be said for the concentration of disbursements on the field, but the control of such disbursements and their allocation should be in the hands of the various Church organizations on the field, looking forward to a gradual complete control by the Indian Church. Much would be gained by union offices of disbursements on the field, by union plans of audit, and standardized systems of accounts and of compiling statistics and other records.

Personnel.

The average missionary does not care to defend himself against the charge of mediocrity levelled by the Commission against the missionary personnel of the countries visited. He never thought of himself as other than an ordinary Christian. He took up the work not because he felt equal to the task but because

an inward urge, which he recognizes as of God, laid upon his heart the call of duty. Other groups and individuals have judged the missionary body more generously than the Commission, but the missionary is more than willing to do conscientiously what he believes to be his duty, and leave the evaluation of it to the future and to the judgment that will come when he stands before the "great white throne." As long as the call continues to voice its demands to his consciousness, and as long as the Church continues its commission, he will feel under obligation to preach that Gospel which sets forth the unsearchable riches of Christ. He will regard his mission as especially to the poor, needy and suffering, and with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, he will do what he can to win all men to a knowledge of Christ, to an experience of God, and to the service of his fellow man. He will get from the Commission's Report everything he can that will make for more effective service, but will in no way discard the supernatural in the Gospel he preaches, nor cease to baptise true and sincere seekers of the truth in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

In Conclusion.

It may be thought by some that this expression of opinion is largely a defence of the *status quo* of the missionary programme of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia. It is not so intended. No one is more fully aware of our shortcomings than we ourselves. We have been frankly admitting those shortcomings for years and just as frankly admitted them to the members of the Laymen's Inquiry. We had hoped that they would be able to offer solutions for many problems which have been unsolved by us. We do not admit that all that has been done in the past seventy-five years has been failure, and that the only solution is to begin again with a new theology, a new aim, a new personnel. Imperfect as it may be, measured by the standard of the Appraisers, our Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia is a growing, promising part of the world-wide Christian Church. It has each year been given more responsibility for the evangelization of India. It has sympathetically worked with other denominations towards the building of a united Indian Church. It looks forward to complete self-support. It

has been allowed to elect its own Bishops. It is about to have its own Church Discipline. For a few more years, while the Church in India is attaining its manhood, it will need the support of the Church in America for its present programme ; for many more years it is hoped that missionaries will be sent from America to work, side by side, with those of the Indian Church, in helping to satisfy missionary needs too great for the efforts of any one Church. The future missionary programme of our Church in America, relating to India, should be fitted into the perfecting of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia, or its successor, a united Church. The impetus of the past seventy-five years must not be lost in the process of eradicating the evils which are retarding further progress. We have therefore in this Study tried to show what may be lost as well as gained by the application of the Appraisal Commission's Report to our work in India.

We cannot but view with misgiving the publication of such a critical report, and the unusually wide publicity given to it, at a time when foreign missions were suffering severe handicaps, not only financially but as to missionary personnel. It must be recognized that the approval of the cause of Missions in general by the Laymen's Commission can hardly compensate for the conviction expressed and advice given by the Commission to Christendom that foreign missions as at present carried on should no longer be financially supported by the Home Base. Nevertheless, the Methodist Episcopal Church in this mission field, relying on a divine grace that has never thus far failed it, is assured of continued success in the great tasks of the Kingdom. In the words of one of American Methodism's greatest and most successful pastors, we say,—“ Our finances are seriously hurt but our purpose is not diminished.” Never was service for Christ in India more fruitful, and never were the opportunities for accomplishing enduring spiritual work more challenging. What we need, and what we pray for, is a great spiritual revival that will bring new power with the coming of new life.

